

IN THE CLAIMS:

Sub 1
1. A method of providing media to a plurality of in-room systems from a head-end system remote from the plurality of in-room systems, said method comprising the steps of:

storing a plurality of acquisition media at each of the in-room systems;

5 storing a plurality of access-only media at the head-end system;

at each in-room system, providing access to each of the access-only media to assist the user in media acquisition choices; and

recording the acquisition of any of the media at the head-end system.

Sub 2
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the acquisition media comprises devices for storing audio data and the access-only media comprises audio data.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the acquisition media devices comprise any one of a CD, DAT, mini disc and cassette.

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4. The method of claim *11* wherein the access-only media is stored on a CD.

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5. The method of claim *11* wherein the access-only media is stored in an audio card having memory.

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6. The method of claim 1 wherein the acquisition media comprises devices for storing audio/video data and the access-only media comprises audio/video data.

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7. The method of claim *2* wherein the acquisition media comprises any one of a CD, DVD and a video cassette.

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8. The method of claim *2* wherein the access-only media is stored on a DVD.

¹⁰₉ The method of claim ²₆ wherein the access-only media is stored in an audio/video card having memory.

~~10. The method of claim 1 wherein the access-only media comprises copies of the acquisition media.~~

²₁₁ The method of claim 1 wherein the access-only media comprises a compilation of samples taken from the acquisition media.

~~12. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of recording the acquisition of any of the acquisition media comprises the steps of:~~

at the in-room system, sensing the removal of one of the acquisition media;
storing an acquisition signal encoded with a room identifier and a media acquisition
5 identifier at the in-room system;
transmitting the acquisition signal to the head-end system; and
processing the acquisition signal to determine any charge associated with the acquisition.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising the steps of:
upon sensing the removal of one of the acquisition media, activating a check-out
timer;
monitoring the in-room system for the return of the removed acquisition media; and
5 if the removed media is not returned within the check-out time allotted, proceeding
with the storing, transmitting and processing steps.

¹⁴₁₄ The method of claim 12 wherein the step of processing the acquisition signal comprises the steps of:
storing an acquisition price look-up table at the head-end system; and
charging the user the price associated with the acquisition.

15. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of recording the access of any of the access-only media.

16. ~~The method of claim 15~~ wherein the step of recording the access of any of the access-only media comprises the steps of:

at the in-room system, sensing the access to one of the access-only media;

storing an access signal encoded with a room identifier and a media access

5 identifier at the in-room system;

transmitting the access signal to the head-end system; and

processing the access signal to determine any charge associated with the access.

17. The method of claim 16 further comprising the steps of:

upon sensing the access of one of the access-only media, activating a free-sample timer;

monitoring the in-room system for continued access to the accessed media; and

5 if the accessed media is accessed throughout the free-sample time allotted, proceeding with the storing, transmitting and processing steps.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein the step of processing the access signal comprises the steps of:

storing an access price look-up table at the head-end system; and

charging the user the price associated with the access.

19. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of tracking the number of times an access-only media is accessed.

20. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of tracking the number of times an acquisition media is acquired.

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transmitting each of the access-only media over a communications line, each access-only media transmitted at a unique frequency;

recording the access of any of the access-only media at the head-end system.

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storing an access signal encoded with a room identifier and a media acquisition identifier at the in-room system;

processing the access signal (to determine) any charge associated with the acquisition.

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monitoring the in-room system for continued access to the accessed media; and

if the accessed media is accessed throughout the free-sample time allotted, proceeding with the storing, transmitting and processing steps.

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charging the user the price associated with the access.

25. The method of claim 21 wherein the access-only media comprises audio data.

26. The method of claim 21 wherein the access-only media comprises audio/video data.

27. A method of providing access-only media to a plurality of in-room systems from a remote master site through a plurality of head-end systems, said method comprising the steps of:

storing a plurality of periodically updated access-only media at the remote master site;

periodically downloading the access-only media to the plurality of head-end systems over a first communications network;

at each of the head-end systems, transmitting each of the access-only media over a second communications network, each access-only media transmitted at a unique frequency;

at each in-room system, providing access to the communication line through a frequency tuner for adjustably tuning to one of the unique frequencies; and

recording the access of any of the access-only media at the head-end system.

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